

## Case study: British Airways

*Undertaking an internal communication audit*



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### Background and challenge

British Airways (BA) is a full service global airline and one of the largest in the world. Its reputation and service levels depend heavily on the ability of its 40,000+ staff to communicate effectively with customers, making the distribution of news and information internally a key priority. Following the appointment of a new group head of internal communication, BA invited us to undertake an internal communication audit and to make recommendations for improvement.

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### Approach

Our approach included four key stages:

- **Initial fact finding:** We started by undertaking a series of interviews with senior managers, communication managers and a cross section of staff from across the airline. We used a structured discussion guide to extract the main communication issues and priorities that we would go on to use as a basis for undertaking our detailed research.
- **Quantitative survey:** The mainstay of our approach was an extensive survey made up principally of multiple choice questions. The survey was made available online and copies were also printed for staff without online access. The survey was left open for 3-4 weeks and attracted a healthy response rate.
- **Qualitative follow up:** The survey results yielded some clear conclusions but also threw up a number of questions that we wanted to explore in greater detail. So we

undertook a number of one-to-one interviews with front line staff from different areas of the business to gather the additional insight we needed. This also provided a good opportunity to validate the conclusions we had drawn from the main survey.

- **Report and recommendations:** The final stage was to summarise the findings and present our recommendations. These recommendations needed to address both strategic questions, such as the wider role of key channels within the mix, and more fundamental ones such as the frequency and format of these channels.

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### Results

We presented the results and recommendations to a number of groups and the various BA communication teams are currently in the process of implementing our suggested actions. Our client has also told us that she is very happy with the robustness of the approach and the incisiveness of the recommendations.

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